



# *apuntes*

Reflexiones teológicas desde el contexto Hispano-Latino

**Migration Matters:  
Perspectives from Theology and Religious Studies**

*Dr. Timothy Matovina & Dr. Thomas Tweed*

**Throwing Stones to Goliath:  
How a Puerto Rican Pentecostal Pastor helped  
Defeat the Greatest Naval Force in the World**

*Dr. Ángel D. Santiago-Vendrell*

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# *Apuntes*

## *Theological Reflections from a Hispanic-Latino Context*

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## From the Editor

Discussions related to migration and military intervention are highly debated and contested topics and on this issue of *Apuntes*, both issues are addressed. The articles not only address these topics from a Latino/a perspective, but also they include and demonstrate a great deal of pastoral concern and care for those who are affected by both migration and violence. Although these articles were written from different backgrounds and perspectives, I am grateful for the way the authors highlight their interest for the well being of persons in vulnerable positions and how the churches and Christian organizations may take an active role in providing assistance for these persons and also raising awareness of these social and economic implications with the community at large and society in general.

The first article written by Dr. Timothy Matovina, Professor of Theology and the William and Anna Jean Cushwa Director of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame and Dr. Thomas Tweed, who is the Shive, Lindsay, and Gray Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, provides an excellent interdisciplinary analysis of migration, including its meanings in a global society, religious and Christian responses, and concludes by highlighting the moral significance of the life of migrant persons and the social responsibility that is required by the communities where they reside.

The second article, written by Dr. Ángel D. Santiago-Vendrell, E. Stanley Jones Assistant Professor of Evangelization at Asbury Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida, describes the work and ministry of a Pentecostal pastor, Rev. Wilfredo Estrada Adorno, whose non-violent work and ministry and his commitment to serve those on vulnerable situations, led him to develop a plan of action and against the U.S. Navy's intervention in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

As always, it is my hope that in reading these articles, each reader will be inspired by these excellent contributions and will find ways to implement plans of action and ministerial programs to address social issues that may be present in their communities.

# **Migration Matters: Perspectives from Theology and Religious Studies<sup>1</sup>**

*Dr. Timothy Matovina & Dr. Thomas Tweed*

## **I. Introduction**

Migration defines our times. Because of technological innovations in transportation and communication, and driven by many different motives, more people are moving—and moving faster and farther—than at any other moment in human history. Yet those on the move across national borders are often demonized in political debates or, at best, imagined only as the passive recipients of humanitarian aid. Political rancor about immigration policy stirs fears and prompts hostility—and not just in the United States. Free trade agreements raise moral questions about why things, consumer products, can cross national boundaries without restriction while workers and their families cannot. Even those who are attending to the needs of migrants, whether their activism is rooted in religious or other motivations, sometimes still imagine migrants as unusual and migration as exceptional. Our research on migration in different contexts, however, has led us to a shared and simple conviction that not only has significant implications for how we understand political debates and outreach efforts, but also calls us to challenge the usual assumptions about the heart of Christianity and the nature of religion. We contend that the migratory is foundational to understanding the human condition, religious practice, and Christian identity.

Whether through actual changes of place or through our citizenship in an interconnected world, migration is part of our everyday life. In a sense, then, we are all on the move. So, although ethical questions about

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<sup>1</sup> Our collaborative authorship of this essay emerges from years of collegiality and friendship, but more immediately stems from our joint plenary presentation at the “*Convivencia: Religious Identities in the New World*” conference convened at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. We thank Professors Amir Hussein and Dorian Llywelyn, S.J. for enabling us to deepen our ongoing conversations through their invitation to address the conference.



humane responses to migrants are vital, sojourners today represent far more than a political issue or a humanitarian crisis. As both of us have learned in our archival and ethnographic work, migrants have much to teach us. Their liminal status, their unyielding *aguante*, and their own interpretations of their situation—and ours—yield insights that deserve more attention. Our scholarly attempts to understand the faith expressions of migrants, especially Mexican and Cuban exiles,<sup>2</sup> have led us to this shared conviction about the significance of the migratory and prompted us to consider the issue from the perspectives of our related but distinct disciplines—theology and religious studies, respectively. The two main sections of this essay consider, first, the meaning of migration in Christian tradition and identity and, second, the significance of crossing for religions in various times and places.<sup>3</sup>

## II. The Faithful as Migrants: A Theological Perspective

Unprecedented numbers of Mexicans migrated to the United States after the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. The guerrilla war known as the Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929) drove even more *émigrés* north to the United States, many fleeing religious persecution. Increasing immigration exacerbated Anglo-American hostility toward Mexicans in neighborhoods, the work place, the SSS (Stop Speaking Spanish Clubs) founded at public schools, and, most conspicuously, in deportation campaigns during the Great Depression.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), esp. chap. 4 “Companion in *el Exilio*”; Thomas A. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Our collaborative process entailed Matovina, as theologian, drafting section one of the essay, Tweed, as religious studies scholar, drafting the second section, mutual editing of each other’s writing, and a common formulation of the essay’s introduction and conclusion.

<sup>4</sup> For a fuller treatment of this social context and the faith expressions of Mexican exiles examined below, see Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful*, chap. 4 “Companion in *el Exilio*.”

In San Antonio, Texas, Mexican exiles revitalized traditions of public devotion to Mexico's national patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Her devotees at San Fernando Cathedral processed through the city streets bearing torches decorated with the green, white, and red colors of the Mexican flag, while members of various pious associations marched under their respective banners and Mexican flags. The juxtaposition of religious and national symbols embodied the famous words of Mexican novelist and journalist Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, which San Antonio's most prominent exile-focused newspaper, *La Prensa*, paraphrased and reprinted several times during this period: "The day that the cult of the Indian Virgin [of Guadalupe] disappears, the Mexican nationality will also disappear."<sup>5</sup> Exiles engaged the Guadalupe feast as an occasion for theological reflection on the situation in their homeland. Some commentators claimed that Mexico's social upheaval was a divine punishment for national infidelity to the covenant God had enacted with the Mexican people through Guadalupe. Others called for covenant renewal to remedy Mexico's ills, such as Huejutla bishop José de Jesús Manríquez y Zárate, who claimed that the church in Mexico suffered "a true Babylonian captivity" and turned to Our Lady of Guadalupe as the sole "liberator and defender of our faith and nationality."<sup>6</sup>

Public adulation of *la Morenita* – the brown-skinned Guadalupe – led other devotees to assess Guadalupe's theological meaning in terms of the hostility and rejection newcomers met in U.S. church and society. As one devotee remarked in acclaiming Guadalupe's compassion for the poor and downtrodden: "Because the Virgin is Indian and brown-skinned and wanted to be born in the asperity of [Juan Diego's] rough cloak – just like Christ wanted to be born in the humility of a stable – she is identified

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<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., *La Prensa*, 10 October 1920; 12 December 1924; 12 December 1925; 12 December 1929; 12 December 1931; 12 December 1933; *Magazín de La Prensa*, 13 December 1931.

<sup>6</sup> *San Antonio Light*, 12 December 1914; *La Prensa*, 12 December 1934; Manríquez y Zárate quotations as cited in D.A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Image and Tradition across Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 312.



with a suffering, mocked, deceived, victimized people.” Another enthusiast opined that *la Morenita* was nothing less than a “symbol” of “our race” and contended that “if it had been a Virgin with blue eyes and blonde hair that appeared to Juan Diego, it is possible that she would have received a fervent devotion, but never as intense, as intimate, nor as trusting as that which the multitudes offer at the feet of the miraculous ‘Guadalupe.’”<sup>7</sup>

Believers like the migratory devotees at San Fernando formulate their faith and identity against the backdrop of the Christian tradition and its Jewish antecedent. Consciously or not, parish leaders and congregants shaped their Guadalupean devotion in light of that tradition: its iconic representations of celestial beings; liturgical and pious practices; teachings on morality, justice, and human dignity; and biblical themes and events such as the Babylonian exile, Christ’s lowly birth in a stable, divine intervention in human life, and covenant. This vast array of images, beliefs, and practices enriched even as it limited and defined devotees’ religious imagination, as well as strengthened their conviction that their faith tradition illuminated a truth larger than the visible realities of their daily lives.

Like many other struggling migrants, San Fernando congregants’ self-identity was rooted in biblical claims about universal human dignity, counteracting social inequalities that diminish oppressed and suffering people’s fundamental sense of worth. At the same time, their exilic devotion shows the danger of appropriating the Jewish and Christian traditions too narrowly—and identifying one’s own nation with the Chosen People, as Mexican devotees did in asserting that divine providence and Guadalupe had elected Mexico for an unparalleled national blessing and covenant. Those familiar with U.S. history ranging from the Pilgrims’ Covenant to Manifest Destiny to Ronald Reagan’s “shining city on a hill” reference will recognize that Guadalupean devotees are not the only nationalists in the hemisphere to appropriate

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<sup>7</sup> *La Prensa*, 12 December 1924; 12 December 1925.

“new Israel” imagery. Such appropriations remind us that ongoing theological analyses are necessary to assess the ways migrants and exiles – as well as native-born citizens – draw from the deep reservoir of the tradition in constructing their self-understanding and identities.

The multivalent San Fernando case raises the vital theological question of how contemporary believers should enact Christian teachings on migrants and strangers. From a theological perspective, these teachings are not static propositions, of course, but part of living faith traditions that must be reinterpreted, rearticulated, and reinvigorated in each new generation and social context. The foundational Biblical sources are a point of departure for such a theological analysis. But it is equally vital that the theological investigation not degenerate into a search for proof texts to support one position or another in immigration debates. For the Christian theologian, a far more fundamental question takes precedence: what role does migration play in faith and identity?

Jewish faith and identity, which shaped Christian understanding, flow to and from the Exodus, but they are also deeply rooted in an abiding, and continually refashioned, memory of their migratory origins and history.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Israel’s foundational Exodus story is so linked to migration that the people’s eventual settlement on the land elicited stern warnings about the danger of forgetting their former state of homelessness. As the author of Deuteronomy recounts, God commanded the people through Moses: “When you have come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it. . .you shall declare before the Lord your God, ‘My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt with a small household and lived there as an alien’” (Deuteronomy 26:1, 5). The Israelites are further enjoined not to let riches and settlement on the land

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<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., *La Prensa*, 10 October 1920; 12 December 1924; 12 December 1925; 12 December 1929; 12 December 1931; 12 December 1933; *Magazín de La Prensa*, 13 December 1931.



make them so comfortable that they become "unmindful of the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. . .[and] guided you through the vast and terrible desert" (Deuteronomy 8:14-15).

Remembrance of their flight from slavery made Egypt a foil for Israel's covenant with God and with one another. The Hebrew Testament shows great wisdom about the patterns of human behavior in its insistence that it was easier to take the Israelites out of Egypt than it was to take Egypt out of the Israelites. Since Egypt was a place of slavery and oppression of the foreigner, Israel must forge a new order in which the stranger receives hospitality and justice. The Mosaic Law is very emphatic in making this connection: the commandment to treat the foreigner with fairness and compassion is intrinsically linked to the memory that "you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt" (cf. Leviticus 19:34, Deuteronomy 10:19, 16:12, 24:18). This call to remember their immigrant roots is not merely a pious admonition. It is a firm commandment: remember. Never forget from where you have come. For Jewish faith, the Torah is not merely legal statutes but a way of life. Inscribing on one's mind and heart the memory of migratory escape from oppression provides the impetus to live as fellow sojourners on the earth with stranger and fellow Israelite alike.

Fear about amnesia of their immigrant heritage was so deep that one strand of Jewish tradition even protested King David's plans to construct the Jerusalem Temple. Identifying himself as Israel's migrant companion, the Lord spoke to David through the prophet Nathan, asking "In all my wanderings everywhere among the Israelites, did I ever utter a word to any one of the judges. . .to ask: Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" (II Samuel 7:7) This prophetic tradition was also deeply suspicious about the establishment of the monarchy itself, a sedentary institution that imperiled Israel's migratory memory and aligned them more closely with the hierarchical structures of Pharaoh's Egypt and the surrounding nations.

Later the pain of exile was a jarring reminder of a Jewish identity born in places far from home. Ezekiel blamed the leaders of Israel, stating that the people “were scattered for lack of a shepherd. . .scattered over the whole earth, with no one to look after them or to search for them” (34: 5-6). Yet exile and restoration coincided with some of the boldest claims about welcoming the stranger in the Hebrew Testament. The book of Ruth accents Jewish intermarriage with Moabites, a stark contrast to the strict censure of such unions when the people first occupied the Promised Land (cf. Deuteronomy 23:4) and the disdain of intermarriage found in the postexilic works of Ezra and Nehemiah (cf. Ezra 9:1-2, 10:2-5 and Nehemiah 13:1-3). Jonah is even more radical. Unlike the vengeful sentiments expressed in texts like Psalm 137 – “Babylon, you destroyer, happy those who shall repay you the evil you have done us” (v. 8) – Jonah is a hyperbolic tale of a resistant Jewish prophet and a repentant Gentile populace gratuitously welcomed into God’s mercy.<sup>9</sup>

Rooted in their ancestral (and often contemporary) identity as wayfarers, for centuries Jewish teachers have demanded compassion for the stranger in their commentaries on the Hebrew Scriptures. A passage in the Babylonian Talmud states that as the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea “the angels wanted to sing their song before the Holy One, blessed be He, but he said to them: ‘My creatures are sinking in the sea, and you want to sing’” (39b). Yahweh’s desire to liberate both the Egyptian citizen and the Hebrew foreigner, the slave and the free, the oppressed and the oppressor, is one of the most moving and startling Jewish commentaries on the Exodus. The command to solidarity with the foreigner extends even to our enemies, for our creator desires to deliver all of us.

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *Jonah, Jesus and Other Good Coyotes: Speaking Peace to Power in the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 62-7, 82-7. The dating of Ruth is a debated issue. Scholars have opined it is from the period of the divided monarchy, the exile, or after the return from exile, though a post-exilic dating is the predominant view.



Christianity inherited the rich Jewish tradition and from its inception articulated both a migrant identity and the command to welcome the stranger. The most incredible migration recorded in the Christian Testament is that of Christ himself: from heaven to earth, from divinity to humanity. Jesus left his heavenly homeland and took the risk of walking among us, so that he might show us the way to migrate back with him. The Incarnation, the immigration of God, reveals the fundamental truth that we are all immigrants on this earth. Christians' confident hope is that when Jesus left this land of his exile he fulfilled his promise: "I am going to prepare a place for you" (John 14:3).

Migration is a central theme in events ranging from Jesus' birth to the genesis of early Christianity.<sup>10</sup> In Matthew's Gospel Jesus and the Holy Family recapitulate the flight to Egypt and Israel's subsequent exodus out of that land. Various well-known passages depict Jesus as opening himself to Gentiles, among them the Syrophoenician or Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30), the Roman centurion (Matthew 8: 5-13, Luke 7:1-10), and the Great Commission to the nations (Matthew 28:16-20). Luke and its companion volume Acts are structured around the travelogue of Christian origins: Jesus' itinerant ministry in Galilee, his journey to Jerusalem, the climactic events in that holy city, and his followers' witness to him "in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Paul, Peter, and other apostles established and formed the earliest Christian communities through their missionary journeys. Christian legend holds that these journeys extended to far flung corners of the earth, such as St. James in Spain, St. Phillip in Asia, and St. Thomas in India and even the Americas.

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<sup>10</sup> For further analysis, see Donald Senior, "'Beloved Aliens and Exiles': New Testament Perspectives on Migration," in *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, ed. Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 20-34.

Early Christians saw themselves as fellow travelers with Christ, deeming themselves followers of “the new way” (cf. Acts 9:2). The First Epistle of Peter is addressed “to those who live as strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1:1), the Epistle of James “to the twelve tribes in the dispersion” (1:1). Non-canonical writings from early Christianity employed similar greetings, such as a letter of Clement of Rome to “the church of God which sojourns in Corinth” and the martyr Polycarp’s missive “to the church of God which resides as a stranger at Philippi.” These self-referents reflected both the actual condition of many Christians as displaced and marginal persons in the Roman Empire and their conviction that “here we have no lasting city” (Hebrews 13:14). The good news was, as the letter to the Ephesians puts it, “you are strangers and aliens no longer. No, you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God” (2:19). Perhaps the most eloquent rendering of the immigrant core of Christian identity is found in the anonymous second- or third-century Letter to Diognetus, which attested that Christians “live in their own countries, but only as aliens. . . They busy themselves on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.”<sup>11</sup>

As in Judaism, migrant origins and identity compels Christians to welcome the outsider, an imperative most famously decreed in Matthew 25: “When did we see you a stranger and welcome you? . . . As often as you did it for one of the least, you did it for me” (vv. 38, 40). Christ is the stranger. The stranger is Christ. This incarnational principle was sorely tested in the first great crisis of Christianity, the Gentile controversy, which elicited insights like Peter’s claim, “God shows no partiality. Rather, those of any nation who fear God and act uprightly are acceptable” (Acts 10:34-35). The incarnation of Christ in the stranger has been articulated in writings from the Scriptures to the Rule of St. Benedict down to Flannery O’Connor’s stories such as “The Displaced Person,” and in lives of numerous saints ranging from Paul to Martin of Tours to Martín de Porres.

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<sup>11</sup> This analysis draws from the insightful work of Peter C. Phan, “Migration in the Patristic Era: History and Theology,” in *ibid.*, 35-61.



But the vision of welcoming the stranger is not merely a pious injunction to charitable action. It flows from the fundamental biblical conviction that to be human is to be a migrant on this earth; to be a person of faith is to be a sojourner in this life; to encounter the migrant to encounter our own truer selves. Theological debates, like those embodied in the Mexican exile devotion at San Antonio, are not only an occasion to seek authentic appropriations of Jewish and Christian teaching on immigration; more fundamentally, they invite us to reexamine the Scriptural tradition through the lens of the migratory, exiled, and other marginal peoples who in fact were its primary human authors.

### **III. The Religious as Itinerants: A Religious Studies Perspective**

In Miami, where Tweed spent five years in the 1990s studying Cuban-American Catholicism, there was a small sign in Spanish—*ermita de la caridad*—that directed drivers to a small shrine near Biscayne Bay, just south of the downtown skyscrapers. At that site, there has been a striking mix of religion and politics, as devotees express “diasporic nationalism” in the material culture at the Catholic shrine—the bust of José Martí facing toward Cuba, the mural that recounted Cuban history, and the six-sided cornerstone. That cornerstone, which rests in a triangulated space beneath the altar’s base, maps the natal terrain onto the Miami shrine. Affixed on each of its six sides are samples of soil and stone from the six pre-revolutionary Cuban provinces. Those fragments were mixed with water taken from a raft on which fifteen refugees died at sea. And its triangular shape recalls the contours of Cuba’s national patroness, Our Lady of Charity, pedestalled directly above the altar, who has been linked with Cuban national identity since the nineteenth century.

Diasporic nationalism also was expressed ritually at the shrine—in Saturday masses broadcast to Cuba on federally funded Radio Martí, at the annual *romerías*, or the picnics for pilgrims who hail from the same province and at the weekday masses, which reunite exiled residents of each the former 126 Cuban municipalities. Despite significant diversity among Cuban migrants, many also expressed diasporic nationalism, an attachment for the landscape and history of their homeland, at the Virgin’s annual festival on September 8<sup>th</sup>, which included a procession, a

rosary, and a mass held in a stadium, where thousands of exiles gather to negotiate meaning and power in relation to that shared national and religious symbol.

Those diasporic artifacts and rituals are transtemporal and translocative, Tweed argued in *Our Lady of the Exile*, his book about the shrine. In other words, things and practices transport devotees in time and space, propelling them back and forth between the homeland and the new land, between a constructed past and an imagined future. Starting with his observations at the shrine, and especially at that annual festival, Tweed then offered a theory of religion, which was published as *Crossing and Dwelling*.<sup>12</sup> He came to the conclusion that he was looking for a theory of religion that made sense of the religious life of transnational migrants and addressed three themes—*movement, relation, and position*.

In *Crossing and Dwelling*, he said a good deal about the positionality of the scholar, and reimagined theories as itineraries, as purposeful wanderings—as plans for a journey, representations of a journey, and the journey itself. We can understand theories, in other words, as positioned sightings.<sup>13</sup> His positioned theoretical sighting from the exilic shrine led him to propose a definition of religion, at once an empirical definition that arose from a case study and a stipulated one that might have wider application:

*Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries.*

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> On theory see *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2001; Ian Rutherford, "Theoria and Darśan: Pilgrimage and Vision in Greece and India," *Classical Quarterly* 50.1 (2000): 133-46.



This definition employs two orienting metaphors to analyze what religion is and what it does: spatial metaphors (*dwelling* and *crossing*) signal that religion is about finding a place and moving across space, and aquatic metaphors (*confluences* and *flows*) signal that religions are not reified substances but complex processes. In this view, religions cannot be reduced to economic forces, social relations, or political interests, but the mutual intercausality of religion, economy, society, and politics means that religious traditions, including Cuban American Catholicism, always emerge from the swirl of transfluvial currents.

The definition also imagines religions as “*organic-cultural flows*” to signal that religions involve both biological and cultural processes. We might say, then, that religions are processes in which social institutions (such as the shrine’s confraternity) bridge organic constraints (hippocampal neural pathways and episodic memory processes) and cultural mediations (the symbol of Mary and the metaphor of exile) to produce reference frames (the Cuban-American community as diaspora and the shrine as diasporic center) that orient devotees in time and space. These reference frames yield a wide range of verbal and non-verbal representations that, in turn, are institutionally, ritually, and materially transmitted—and enfolded back into the complex bio-cultural process. Institutions are central in this theory. Just as all space is striated, marked by social power, there are no unimpeded flows. Religious flows, in other words, are propelled, compelled, and blocked, directed this way and that, by institutional networks. For example, there have been attempts by the Coast Guard over the years to block aquatic crossings to South Florida, just as border police, and immigration laws, affect the flow of migrants across the border between Mexico and California.

But why do religious flows exert such a hold on devotees, and how are spiritual confluences distinguishable from other cultural trajectories? The next two phrases in the definition—*intensify joy and confront suffering* and *human and suprahuman forces*—propose answers to those

questions.<sup>14</sup> The phrase “intensify joy and confront suffering” conditionally affirms the long tradition of interpreters who have suggested that religions are responses to evil, but it also suggests that natality is as important as mortality. Religions are about enhancing the wonder as much as wondering about evil. Satisfying theories of religion say something about what distinguishes religions from other cultural forms. For that reason, this definition includes the phrase—*human and suprahuman forces*—to note that adherents appeal to suprahuman forces as they intensify joy and confront suffering. Further, the religious also mark and cross the boundary between life and death, the *ultimate horizon* of human life, though traditions imagine that crossing differently, as transport one from place to another or as transformation from one condition to another.

Drawing on spatial more than aquatic tropes, the phrase “make homes and cross boundaries” says more about *how* the religious draw on human and suprahuman forces to intensify joy and confront suffering.<sup>15</sup> Religious women and men make meaning and negotiate power as they appeal to contested historical traditions of story telling, object making, and ritual performance in order to make homes and cross boundaries. Religions, in other words, involve finding one’s place and moving through space. One of the imperfections the religious confront is that humans are always in danger of being disoriented. Religions, in turn,

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<sup>14</sup> In emphasizing joy, I am reaffirming a comment made by William James, who argued that “happiness” is the central concern of humans: “How to gain, how to keep, how to recover happiness, is in fact for most men at all times the secret motive of all they do, and of all they are willing to endure.” William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Penguin, 1982), 78. Others have made a similar point. Ludwig Feuerbach talked about a “drive to happiness” in his *Lectures on the Essence of Religion* (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper and Row, 1967). In a similar way, Grace Jantzen proposed we focus on natality instead of mortality: *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 93. Another volume published the same year also used *dwelling* in useful ways, as it championed *travel* as a root metaphor: James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 1-13.



*orient* in time and space. They function as watch and compass. In this sense, religions are about dwelling. They situate the devout in four chronotopes (or space-times)—the body, the home, the homeland, and the cosmos. Religions position women and men in natural terrain and social space. In other words, religions involve homemaking.

But—and this is significant for our shared emphasis on movement—the religious are migrants as much as settlers, and religions make sense of the nomadic as well as the sedentary in human life. They involve another spatial practice—*crossing*. They employ tropes, artifacts, and rituals to mark boundaries, and they prescribe and proscribe different kinds of movement across those boundaries. Religions enable, compel, and constrain *terrestrial crossings*, as devotees traverse natural terrain and social space beyond the home and across the homeland, for example, in the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca; *corporeal crossings*, as religions fix devotees' attention on the limits of embodied existence and the stages of life, as with a Bar Mitzvah; and *cosmic crossings*, as the pious imagine and cross the ultimate horizon of human life, as with a monk who bows in homage to the Buddha, reclining before his entrance into final nirvana.

I first noticed these kinds of crossings at the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity in Miami. Even if religious flows crossed with other transfluvial currents in the migration from the island, biblical tropes like *exile* named their terrestrial crossings by plane, ship, and even raft. And many of those exiles claimed that the Virgin safeguarded them on their journey. Even if the usual rites of passage—baptisms, marriages, and funerals—are prohibited at the shrine, the Virgin also prompted some corporeal crossings, as when mothers prayed to Our Lady of Charity, the patroness of childbirth, for help in conceiving or aid in giving birth, and when the names of deceased devotees were read aloud from the shrine's altar.

Finally, the Cubans' piety envisioned an ultimate horizon and a way to cross it, and both types of cosmic crossing were imagined by those

exiles. When they prayed during mass to “Our Father, who art in heaven”—and in other individual and collective rituals—Cuban migrants reaffirmed a traditional Christian cosmography and teleography, as they imagined salvation as transport to another realm. They also imagined salvation as transformation, a change in their collective condition: again referring to biblical narratives, they compared themselves to Jews who yearned to be delivered from bondage and conveyed to the Promised Land. At the annual festival for the Virgin, thousands of devotees in the crowd responded to the priest’s chants of “¡Viva la Virgen de Caridad!” by shouting in unison “*Salva a Cuba*.” It was Cuba too that needed saving, and for that they appealed to the national patroness, who had traveled the seas and established a crossing place in Miami.

As for exiled Cubans in South Florida, crossing in all these forms is decisive for religion; and migration, one kind of terrestrial crossing, is fundamental to religious practice and human life. This theoretical perspective, which emerged from observations at a site where the displaced worship, suggests that itinerancy is a defining religious theme in many times and places, and not just among those Cuban exiles who transported themselves to their imagined homeland by turning to religious artifacts, narratives, and practices at Our Lady of Charity’s Miami shrine.

#### **IV. Conclusion: The Idol of Stasis**

While dwelling practices, and the inevitable attempts at orientation and settlement, are part of human life as well as religious and theological responses to it, scholars—and activists too—should be careful not to presuppose the sedentary as normative. Settling, as opposed to moving, can too easily become an idol, and the privileging of the sedentary can marginalize those on the move, particularly transnational migrants. From the Roman Empire to the conquest of America’s indigenous peoples to the anti-immigrant furor of our own day, too often we have equated rootedness with civilization and acceptability and mobility with



barbarism and criminality. But migrants offer an invitation. They invite us to *recordar* – to recall to heart– the core of Christian identity as sojourners on the earth. They remind us that crossing, and not just dwelling, is central to religion. Both as we do our academic work in theology and in religious studies, and as we confront the challenges of living morally in a global age, an age of unprecedented migration, we need to revalue the nomadic in human life and, in turn, revalue the migrant. We are all, our converging perspectives suggest, itinerants. We are all on the move.

## Resumen

En este ensayo colaborativo e interdisciplinario, consideramos migración en la tradición Cristiana y el significado de “cruzar” en muchos tiempos y lugares. Concluimos que no se debe presumir que el ser sedentario es normativo, porque tal presunción puede marginalizar los que están moviendo, particularmente migrantes transnacionales. Nuestras investigaciones académicas en teología y en estudios religiosos, y además los desafíos de vivir moralmente en una época global, una época de migración sin precedentes, nos impulsan reevaluar la migración en la vida humana y, a la vez, reevaluar el migrante.



# **Throwing Stones to Goliath: How a Puerto Rican Pentecostal Pastor Helped Defeat the Greatest Naval Force in the World**

*Dr. Ángel D. Santiago-Vendrell*

## **I. We Have Come to Liberate You: Conflictive History of the U.S. Navy in Puerto Rico**

When General Nelson Miles arrived at the coast of Guanica, Puerto Rico in 1898, he said, “We have not come to make war upon the people of a country that for centuries has been oppressed, but on the contrary, to bring you protection, to promote your prosperity, and to bestow upon you the immunities and blessings of the liberal institutions of our government.”<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, after more than a century, the Puerto Rican people are still struggling to understand their relationship with the United States.

The history of U.S. relations with Puerto Rico has been understood in three different perspectives according to whom one ask. These three opinions are most clearly seen in the three major political parties in the Island. *El Partido Nuevo Progresista* (PNP) which favors statehood for the Island sees the United States as empowering the Puerto Rican people through technological advances, education, civilization, urbanization, and liberal institutions. For them the process of full integration into U.S. society is still missing as they cannot vote for the president and do not have any members representing the Island in congress. Thus, the only solution viable is for the United States to confer statehood to the Island. *El Partido Popular Democratico* (PPD) wants to maintain the status quo and keep the current relationship of Puerto Rico with the United States as a commonwealth state or *Estado Libre Asociado*. It seeks to enhance its constitutional power by having the best of both worlds meaning an

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<sup>1</sup> General Nelson Miles, quoted in Mario Murrillo, *Islands of Resistance: Puerto Rico, Vieques, and U.S. Policy* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001), 9.

autonomous government in Puerto Rico without losing its status as a protectorate of the U.S. The third political alternative is represented by the *Partido Independentista de Puerto Rico* (PIP). This group wants complete control of the destiny of Puerto Rico with no interference from the United States. These three divergent political positions which are always colliding with each other came to unity when an 'errand' five-hundred pounds bomb killed David Sanes Rodríguez on April 19, 1999 in the *Isla Nena de Vieques*.

The history of U.S. relations with Puerto Rico dates back to the Spanish-American war of 1898 which gave the U.S. control over Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean and the Philippines in Southeast Asia. Christians saw these events as an opportunity to bring the light of Christ to these lands. The editorial of the *Missionary Review of the World* reads, "The momentous war with Spain seems destined to cause changes in the policy of the United States, and to greatly influence our future. It also already gives evidence of being the means of furthering the progress of the Kingdom of God on earth."<sup>2</sup> Another editorial reads, "The present war with Spain has an important religious and missionary bearing. The government of Spain has denied to her colonies religious as well as civil liberty, and has kept them in moral darkness, as well as in material depression."<sup>3</sup> In this regard, the MEC compared "the nation's success with the will of God, and Manifest Destiny was equated to the providence of God."<sup>4</sup> This attitude could be seen in a sermon preached by Charles L. Goodell at Hanson Place Methodist Church in Brooklyn in May, 1898. The sermon read:

Today we step on a higher level and serve notice upon the world that we are *the friends of the oppressed* everywhere...I was never so proud of America as I am today. The old flag never looked so glorious to me. It is floating in the

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<sup>2</sup> *The Missionary Review of the World* 12 (January-December, 1899), Editorial department, (September, 1898), 698.

<sup>3</sup> *The Missionary Review of the World* 11, (January-December, 1898) Missionary Digest Department, (July, 1898): 520.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth M. McKenzie, *The Robe and the Sword: The Methodist Church and the Rise of American Imperialism* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1961): 31.



East today the proud protector of 9,000,000 of the oppressed. The thunderous shock of Dewey's cannon blew the rack and the thumb-screw and the whole paraphernalia of medieval persecution off the face of the earth forever...I watch the banners of the world tonight, and when I see what each one represents, I glory in the fact that without dispute the flag that presses closest after the crimson cross is the Stars and Stripes.<sup>5</sup>

As a surprised to Puerto Ricans, on August 12, 1898, the Treaty of Paris officially ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States, while Cuba gained its independence.<sup>6</sup> Within eighteen months, the U.S. Congress passed the Foraker Act, thus making Puerto Rico the first unincorporated territory of the U.S. Section VII of the Foraker Act also established Puerto Rican citizenship as an effort to legitimize colonial rule in the Island. The new government had a governor and an executive council appointed by the President of the United States, a House of Representatives with 35 elected members, a judicial system with a Supreme Court and a United States District Court, and a non-voting Resident Commissioner in Congress. The Executive council was all appointed: five individuals were selected from island residents while the rest were from those in top cabinet positions, including attorney general and chief of police (also appointed by the President). The Insular Supreme Court was also appointed. In addition, all federal laws of the United States were to be in effect on the island. The first civil governor of the island under the Foraker Act was Charles H. Allen, inaugurated on May 1, 1900 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This law was superseded in 1917 by the Jones Act which granted Puerto Ricans in the Island U.S. citizenship. Murillo Points out, "The granting of U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans by no means resolved the status issue. In fact, after 1917, the debate over the future of Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States has intensified, and has since been part of Puerto Rican politics."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in McKenzie, *The Robe and the Sword*, 70-71.

<sup>6</sup> Murrillo, *Islands of Resistance*, 25.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

If relations with Puerto Rico were treacherous to say the least, at the beginning of World War II they became up-right manipulative, especially with Vieques. As Germany was waging war against the Europe, the United States became increasingly worried about a German invasion in the Caribbean. Legislation between 1941 and 1947 legalized the Navy's takeover of the eastern and western sections of the *Isla Nena* and displaced more than eight-hundred families who moved to the central zone. The displaced Puerto Ricans had now as its neighbors the Navy with its constant war games with live ammunition. President Roosevelt envisioned a base of the magnitude of Pearl Harbor in the Caribbean composed of mainland Puerto Rico, Culebra, and Vieques. Vieques, which is six miles southeast of Puerto Rico, measures twenty miles long and three miles wide. The total population before World War II was ten-thousand inhabitants. During the WWII, twenty-six thousands of its thirty-three acres were expropriated by the U.S. government.<sup>8</sup> Since then, the U.S. government has tried to take control of the whole Island for its war games. Contrary to the common assumption that military bases bring with them economic development for the places in which they are erected, the case of Vieques proves this theory as fallacious. Ketherine McCaffrey points out, "The Navy usurped land, water, air, marine resources and caused environmental degradation. It interfered with the island's economic development, which it viewed as a threat to military operations. Vieques did not benefit from economic progress or affluence; its legacy from the military occupation has been stagnation and poverty."<sup>9</sup> Vieques was drained from its resources controlled of the U.S. Navy. Despite constant pressure from Puerto Rican politicians after World War II to return the expropriated lands to the lawful owners, the Viequeses, the Navy had other plans. Now the *Isla Nena* would become a year-round training space for the U.S. military.

During the Kennedy administration, on the summit of the cold war, a plan was proposed to expropriate the remaining land and move the Viequeses to St. Croix. The magnitude of this secret plan between the

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<sup>8</sup> Mullenneaux, *Ni Una Bomba Mas!*, 23.

<sup>9</sup> McCaffrey, *Military Power and Popular Protest*, 11.



Kennedy administration and the then governor Luis Muñoz Marín even called for the removal of the dead from the cemeteries so Viequesenses would never return to their home land, not even to pay tribute to their dead families.<sup>10</sup> The Dracula Plan or C-V came into existence because the military saw Puerto Rican planners who wanted to revitalize the ailing economy of Vieques by creating a tourist destination in the south as interfering in the protection of national security.<sup>11</sup> In 1960, Frederick Woolworth's Woolnor Corporation was interested in building a tourist hotel with one-hundred rooms, a golf course, and a marina in Vieques. With the paranoia of Cuba becoming a Communist state, the U.S. government argued that Puerto Rico, and particularly Vieques, was the last frontier of defense and training for the Caribbean and Latin America against Russia. Therefore, the navy would not accept a resort that would bring economic prosperity to Vieques at the expense of its training grounds. The navy crushed the plans to build the resort. Because the navy controlled the air-space of Vieques, it denied a petition to construct an airport. To make matters clear and adding injury to insult, the navy contacted Woolnor Corporation indicating that if the company constructed a hotel it would risk expropriation.<sup>12</sup> The *Plan Dracula* did not take effect, but that does not mean the navy would abandon its position of controlling the whole island of Vieques.

The expropriation of land by the navy meant that agriculture died as business and that families were not able to cultivate the land for food. This sad reality led to the only other alternative for sustenance, fishing. However, with the east and west coast occupied by the navy and restricted for the most part of the year, fisherman had little room to maneuver. The first outburst of protest came from Santiago Melendéz on February 1979. Leading a flotilla of fellow fishermen, Melendéz crossed the restricted zone and crisscrossed the path of a NATO warship that was part of an intense military exercise in the south coast.<sup>13</sup> The group of

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<sup>10</sup> Evelyn Vélez Rodríguez, *Proyecto V-C: Negociaciones Secretas entre Luis Muñoz Marín y la Marina. Plan Dracula* (Rio Piedras: Editorial Edil, 2002), 15.

<sup>11</sup> McCaffrey, *Military Power and Popular Protest*, 37.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>13</sup> Mullenneaux, *Ni Una Bomba Mas!*, 32.

fisherman continued with their protest by crisscrossing and interrupting military training in the restricted zone. The situation became extremely tense as the fisherman penetrated again the marine's camp in Playa Allende on the south shore of the target area. While they were celebrating an ecumenical service of prayer, federal marshals arrested the twenty-one protesters.<sup>14</sup> The protesters were sentenced to six months in prison for trespassing federal restricted zone. Tensions increased by the navy and Congress threatening to impose economic sanctions against Puerto Rico and fire civilian employees of Roosevelt Roads. In all the chaos, Governor Carlos Romero Barcelo sued the federal government for ecological damages against Puerto Rico. The legal action was drop by the Puerto Rican government based on the intervention of Washington and the assurance that the Navy will embrace a policy of "good-will neighbor" with the people of Vieques. Of course, that never happened and tensions continue to fuel until the incident of the death of David Sanes Rodríguez in 1999.

Unlike most other conflicts between Viequenses and the Navy in which the population of the big island were not involved or only the *Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño* showed solidarity with the people of Vieques, this time the three main political parties were fed-up with the actions of the Navy. In an unusual turn of events for the statehood political party, Governor Pedro Rosello demanded from the United States' Navy to stop all military exercises in Vieques. He announced the creation of a working committee to study the issue of Vieques and how best they could resolve it. In their report, the committee was unanimous in its decision to for the Navy to stop all military training, return all occupy land to the rightful owners (Viequenses), and an ecological cleanup of the devastated territory. Going against his best judgment, Governor Rosello finally yielded to the demands of Washington and accepted a proposal from President William Clinton. These are the three main points of the proposal:

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 34.

“First, during the period leading up to the vote, I am ordering the training zone on Vieques will be limited to non-explosive ordnance, meaning there will be no live fire. I am also directing the Navy and Marine Corps to cut in half the amount of time they will spend training. In 1998, our troops trained for 182 days on Vieques, this year they will be authorized for 90 days.”

“Second, to address the problems caused by past training, we will implement measures to meet the health, safety, environmental and economic concerns of the people of Vieques. Measures we will implement include positioning Navy ships to reduce noise; development of a new ferry pier and terminal; creating a new commercial fishing area; temporary compensation for fishermen; expanding and improving roads; a bioluminescent bay preservation program; a job-training program for young people; providing land to extend the airport runway; and a public health service study.”

“Third, I will also ask Congress to begin transferring title to land on the western quarter of the island to Puerto Rico. In the event that the residents of Vieques vote to continue training on the island, in recognition of the burden such training places on the community, we will increase the investment we make to meet infrastructure and development needs. In the event that they vote for an end to training, we will dispose of the land through the normal federal process.”<sup>15</sup>

The proposal was accepted by Governor Rosello, but the Puerto Rican people rejected it. There was no turning back to the manipulations of empire in this case. It is here, when the Puerto Rican government yielded to the whim of the invader that Wilfredo Estrada Adorno becomes a charismatic leader uniting the people of Puerto Rico in one accord.

## **II. Wilfredo Estrada Adorno: A Pentecostal Pastor Committed to Social Justice**

Estrada Adorno is a Pentecostal pastor with the Church of God, Cleveland, TN. He was trained at Lee College in Cleveland, TN from where he obtained a B.A. in theological studies in 1966. He also pursued

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<sup>15</sup> William Clinton, “Address to the Puerto Rican People in National TV,” <http://www.vieques-island.com/navy/clinton2.html>.



further studies at Candler School of Theology earning a Master's of Divinity and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Ministry in 1982. Apart from being a pastor, he worked in the Pentecostal Bible College in Saint Just, PR, as President. As President of the Pentecostal Bible College, Estrada Adorno was instrumental for the accreditation of that institution under the American Association of Bible Colleges and Caribbean Association of Colleges. We can see his commitment to a gospel that addresses all aspects of human existence in one of his early published papers for *El Evangelio*, the official journal of the Church of God in Spanish. In an article entitled "Una Congregación-Ministrante: un modelo pastoral neotestamentario aplicada a la situación contemporánea," Estrada Adorno argued that it was an utmost concern for pastors to understand the sociological, economic, educational, and cultural context in which they minister.<sup>16</sup> Also, Estrada Adorno worked as chaplain for thirteen years in several contexts: three years in the state penitentiary of Puerto Rico, two years in the federal prison of Atlanta, GA, and eight years in the Veterans Hospital.<sup>17</sup>

Estrada Adorno's reconciliatory spirit could be seen in his doctoral project for Candler School of Theology, *The Reconciliation of Charismatic Pastors and Bible College Professors in the Service of Training for Future Ministry in the Pentecostal Bible College of the Church of God in Puerto Rico*. Estrada Adorno's project deals with the issue of reconciliation between local pastors who have not received any theological training, thus looking with suspicion toward theological education, and professors of the Pentecostal Bible College who look at local pastors with antagonism and disdain.<sup>18</sup> To accomplish

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<sup>16</sup> Wilfredo Estrada Adorno, "Una Congregación-Ministrante: un modelo pastoral neotestamentario aplicada a la situación contemporánea," *El Evangelio* 12:1 (1970), 110-112.

<sup>17</sup> Lugo, "Entrevista al Dr. Wilfredo Estrada Adorno" *El Evangelio* 25:1 (Enero-Marzo 1987), 4-9.

<sup>18</sup> Wilfredo Estrada Adorno, *The Reconciliation of Charismatic Pastors and Bible College Professors in the Service of Training for Future Ministry in the Pentecostal Bible College of the Church of God in Puerto Rico*. Doctor of Ministry Project, Candler School of Theology, 1982.

reconciliation between pastors and Bible college professors, Estrada Adorno invited nine pastors and three professors to engage him in a year of reflection about the limitations and opportunities in front of them. His assumption was that theological education cannot be done in a vacuum by an institution acting alone. Rather, students and the Bible College should partner with pastors and local churches to send students to these churches for their practical work.<sup>19</sup> Estrada Adorno achieved his goal of reconciling professors of the Pentecostal Bible College with local pastors by establishing a program of “supervised ministry” in which local pastors became mentors for students for the four years of study. A student was assigned to a particular local church and the local pastor was responsible to care for the spiritual and material needs of the student for that period of time.

### III. A Sacramental Ministry of Accompaniment

Estrada Adorno’s participation in the struggle for the liberation of Vieques comes from his understanding of the Judeo-Christian faith. For him, both Judaism and Christianity offered an understanding of the faith rooted in a compromise to seek and be at the side of the poor, the widows, and the marginalized. It is in this contextual reality of God demanding justice from God’s people that Estrada’s ministerial career takes the form of a “sacrament.”<sup>20</sup> A sacrament is an act to make visible grace. By emphasizing his ministry as a sacrament, Estrada Adorno was conscious that he wanted to make the invisible mercy of God palpable in acts of grace with the people of Vieques. He points out, “This sacramental pastoral participation in our daily life is not easy to understand; it is a solitary path and requires interior power to confront the frivolous critics that don’t want to understand the unequivocal compromise of the Gospel with the poor and dispossessed.”<sup>21</sup> When the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 1-12.

<sup>20</sup> Wilfredo Estrada Adorno, *Pastores O Politicos con Sotanas? Pastoral de la Guardarraya en Vieques* (Trujillo Alto, PR: Editorial Guardarrayas, 2003), 28-29.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 32.

governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Rosello, yielded to the demands of Washington, a void was created in the struggles against the Navy's war games in Vieques. This void was filled up by the ecumenical coalition formed by Estrada Adorno.

The Ecumenical Coalition included sectors from all religious creeds in Puerto Rico. The Methodist Church of Puerto Rico was represented by Bishop Juan Antonio Vera Méndez, Monseñor David Alvarez and Monseñor Roberto González Nieves represented the Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church was represented by Monseñor Alvaro Corrada del Rio, Rev. Francisco Soza represented Lutherans, and Wilfredo Estrada Adorno representing the Biblical Society of Puerto Rico. It is interesting that even though Estrada Adorno is a Pentecostal pastor with the Church of God in Cleveland, the Pentecostals did not supported him in public and no official Church gave him an endorsement. In this sense, Pentecostals shinned because of their absence in the process of liberating Vieques as churches, despite the recognition that one of them was the leader of the movement. The Ecumenical Coalition did not want the momentum of the unity formed thus far to disappear. In an act of defiance against all odds, the Ecumenical Coalition organized a mass demonstration to try to sway the Clinton/Rosello deal. This civic march was a march for the peace of Vieques. Governor Rosello saw the proposal as a political attack against his administration and against the United States. He called all the members of his party (PNP) not to participate by any means in the mass demonstration and began a propaganda campaign against the Ecumenical Coalition calling them "separatists, anti-patriotic and communists."<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the Ecumenical Coalition continued with its plan to have a mass demonstration for the peace of Vieques. On February 21, 2000, more

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<sup>22</sup> Lester McGrath-Andino, "Intifada: Church—State Conflict in Vieques, Puerto Rico" in Gastón Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo and Jesse Miranda (eds.) *Latino Religions and Civil Activism in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 263-278 [270].



than 200,000 Puerto Ricans march peacefully from the Americas Expressway to the Roberto Clemente Sports Complex. Ana Lydia Vega, writer for *El Nuevo Dia Newspaper*, captured the ethos of the mass demonstration when in her editorial for that day:

What distinguishes this march from all previous ones in the history of Puerto Rico was its undisputed and radical originality. Original was the bright diversity of its participants. To the ecumenical calling of its organizers all the tribes responded in one accord. Young and elders, white and blue collar workers, residents and tourists, Puerto Ricans and North Americans, nationalists and pro-statehoods, and believers and atheists shared the emotion of being one people.<sup>23</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

As in the biblical story of David against Goliath, an insignificant Pentecostal pastor was chosen by God to wage war against the most powerful military force known to human beings today. The struggle of the Puerto Rican people against the oppressive forces of the war machine should be seen in the context of colonialism and slavery against a people who have never had a say in their self-determination as a sovereign nation. The great victory of the mass demonstration was a testimony of the dedication of a group of Christians who saw the inaction of the government and took the initiative of providing a voice for the voiceless victims of Vieques. However, the struggle against the U.S. Navy was far from over. It took another three years of non-violence civil disobedience, constant threats from Washington, and many imprisonments to achieve the final victory of the people of Vieques against the Navy. It was not until May 1, 2003 that President George W. Bush ordered the Navy to stop military operation in Vieques. Because of the sacramental nature of Estrada Adorno's ministry, he was arrested for being in solidarity with the people of Vieques and had to serve a thirty-two day sentence in the Federal Prison of Puerto Rico. Many other activists, politicians, and actors were also arrested. Some of the personalities arrested and tried for

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<sup>23</sup> Ana Lydia Vega, "El Día que los Angeles Marcharon" [The Day that the Saints Marched] *El Nuevo Dia*. Martes 29 de Febrero, 167.

trespassing were U.S. Representative Luís Gutiérrez (D-Ill.), Rev. Al Sharpton, Robert Kennedy Jr., actors Rosie Perez, Edward James Olmos, and Jacqueline Jackson (wife of Jesse Jackson).<sup>24</sup> Estrada Adorno envisioned a culture of peace with his non-violence approach rooted in the Christian tradition, but also informed by the ministry of Martin Luther King. In his deposition to the Federal Judge in the Federal Court of Puerto Rico, Estrada Adorno quoted Martin Luther King three times. For him there was a contradictory principle governing the actions of the United States, the contradiction of legal laws and moral laws. Legal laws allowed the Navy to bomb Vieques continually, but rather, he circumscribed to the moral law that reiterates that God is the God of life and not a God of death. That every time the Navy bombs Vieques it is promoting a culture of death contrary to God. As Martin Luther King, Estrada Adorno believed that what distinguishes the U.S. government from a totalitarian regime was the recognition that each individual have certain basic rights that are neither conferred by the state nor derived by the state, but rather, are rights conferred by God.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> McGrath, "Intifada," 272.

<sup>25</sup> Estrada Adorno, *Pastores o Politicos con Sotanas?*, 178.



## Resumen

Este artículo explora el papel que las Fuerzas Navales de los Estados Unidos jugaron en la Isla hermana de Puerto Rico, Vieques, y como el ministerio de un pastor Pentecostal canalizó las angustias y dolor emocional de un pueblo para sobreponer años de dominación colonial por un poder opresor. Wilfredo Estrada Adorno fue uno de los principales protagonistas en los actos de desobediencia civil en contra de la maquinaria de Guerra de los Estados Unidos en la Isla de Vieques. Sin embargo, su nombre está ausente entre los principales textos sobre la problemática de las Fuerzas Navales en relación con Vieques. Primero, el autor presenta la conflictiva historia de las Fuerzas Navales Estadounidenses en la Isla de Vieques. Segundo, el autor traza la influencia de Wilfredo Estrada Adorno en el conflicto a través de una teología de compromiso y no-violencia en desobediencia civil. En conclusión, el autor describe como la influencia de Estrada Adorno ayudó a la moral del pueblo Puertorriqueño para enfrentar y ganar en contra de la mas ponderosa fuerza naval del mundo.



